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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the evolution of the use of "devil" (or as it is often spelled to represent the vernacular, divil) as part of a negation "Divil a one" (= "not a one") in Irish and Hiberno-English and traces the influence of language contact in this history. While it is found that multiple causes resulted in the development of the "devil" negation, the influences of substrate, superstrate, and universal factors are unequal. It is concluded that the principle of minimal necessity applies here: when substrate influence can be posited for the same structure in two or more language contact situations, and when this influence arises independently in at least one of the situations, the substrate is the primary causal factor in both, unless there is evidence that the structure could not have developed without a contribution from superstrate influence. contains 46 references. (Author/MSE)

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TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

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# Causation in language contact: a devilish problem

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# Causation in language contact: a devilish problem*

by

Terence Odlin

## 0 Introduction

Virtually every case of what Thomason and Kaufman (1988) call "language shift" invites a debate on the sources: *substrate* influence, *superstrate* influence, or language universals—or some combination thereof—are always possible causal factors. For example, even though there is a consensus that Dravidian languages were once more widely spoken in the Indian subcontinent, there is considerable debate on just what characteristics—if any—of Indic languages can be ascribed to a Dravidian substrate, i.e. the residual traces of a language formerly spoken by a group that has come to use a new language, usually termed the superstrate (cf. Southworth 1971, Emeneau 1980, Hock 1984). Similar debates have arisen among creolists over the importance of universals versus substrate influence (cf. Mühlhäusler 1986, Muysken and Smith 1986, Singler 1988, Bickerton 1988, 1989, 1994, Holm 1989, Mufwene 1990, McWhorter 1992, 1994).

What holds for the Indian subcontinent and for pidgins and creoles is also true for Hiberno-English (cf. Bliss 1984, Thomason and Kaufman 1988, Lass 1986, 1990a, Odlin 1992). By all accounts, the current varieties of English spoken in Ireland owe much to the

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history of relations between Ireland and Britain, especially from the Tudor campaign of colonization in Ireland, which led to intensive settlement by English-speaking emigrants from England and Scotland. This settlement resulted in English being more widely spoken in the Early Modern English (EME) period than it had been before, which helped to set in motion a process of language shift, with Irish eventually disappearing in most areas.[1] As might be expected, early as well as recent explorations of Hiberno-English discuss putative contributions of either the EME superstrate or the Irish substrate—or both (e.g. Burke 1896, Joyce 1910/1988, Harris 1984, 1986, Filppula 1986, 1990, Lass 1990a). In addition to the controversy over substrate and superstrate, there have been recent arguments on the role that language universals may also have played (e.g. Guilefoyle 1986, Kallen 1990). Such discussions have not, however, produced a consensus on the causes that most affected the development of Hiberno-English.

Not surprisingly, the lack of agreement in specific cases has led to just as deep divisions of opinion about the general theoretical status of substrate influence, divisions that are evident in textbooks on historical linguistics. Where Jeffers and Lehiste (1979), for example, point to Hiberno-English as a clear case of such influence, Hock (1986) claims that there are no clear cases, and he suggests that hopes of finding such cases are illusory. Clearly, building a wider consensus on the status of substrate influence is desirable, but this is difficult partly because of the lack of general principles about causation in historical linguistics, and partly because of the specific problem of dealing with the issue of single versus multiple causes.

Defining the difference between single versus multiple causes in language contact is straightforward enough, even though the general issue of causation has led to considerable disagreements in historical linguistics (e.g. Lass 1980, 1987, Rauch 1981, Vennemann 1983, Anttila 1988, Devitt 1989). Single-cause contact theories allege one and only one source as seen, for example, in a claim by Bliss (1984, p.151) that "in grammar, syntax and idiom the peculiarites of southern Hiberno-English depend exclusively on the Irish language". In contrast, multiple-cause theories posit more than one source, as seen in án account by Harris (1986, p.193) of certain verb phrase constructions in Hiberno-English and other contact

varieties: "the distinctive habitual markers in both the substrate and the superstrate had a mutually reinforcing effect on the development of a similar category in the new contact vernaculars".

In discussions of language contact, the issue of single versus multiple causes has been addressed from time to time, but the merits of multiple causation seem self-evident to many linguists. Mühlhäusler, for example, argues that superstrate and substrate influence often interact with universals and with each other because

> Where these factors coincide, the cognitive cost for those in the business of developing a pidgin or creole is least, and it is for this reason that pidginists and creolists should be on a constant look-out for such developmental conspiracies and the linguistic syncretism resulting from them. (1986, p.132)

Mühlhäusler clearly believes that multiple causation allows language learners to achieve economies in developing a contact variety. On the other hand, a single-cause argument of Lass about Hiberno-English invokes another kind of economy:

> Given the choice between (demonstrable) residue [i.e. superstrate influence] and (putative) contact-influence [substrate influence] the former is the more parsimonious and hence preferred account. (1990a, p.148)

Although Lass focuses in this article on a small subset of phonological characteristics, his overall scepticism about substrate influence is evident:

> we can define it [Hiberno-English], not as a "contact-English" in any important sense (regardless of the fact that it began as a second-language variety), but as a perfectly normal first language, [an] internally evolved variety, with only marginal contact effects. (p.148)

The appeals to economy that Mühlhäusler and Lass make stem from different considerations: for the former, economy is a question of the most efficient ways individuals can acquire a first or a second language, while for the latter the economy sought is in the diachronic explanation.[2] Whatever the merits of these different appeals to economy, any viable explanation must account for all the relevant

facts.[3] While multiple-cause theories usually try to include all such facts, they may not always be totally satisfactory unless they indicate the *relative importance* of each factor (cf. Rauch 1981). Some explanations (e.g. Cassidy 1966, Joseph 1983) give equal weight to all causes that seem to be involved, and a number of problems in language contact may never allow for any sort of ranking.[4] However, ranking is desirable whenever possible: otherwise, one would have to consider substrate and superstrate influence, for example, to be equally important in all cases. In this sense, single-cause explanations that are incomplete may at least have the merit of foregrounding the most important factor in a complex chain of causes.

This paper attempts to identify a causality principle that will apply not only in the case of Hiberno-English but in certain other situations where substrate influence is suspected. The principle, which is stated in section 6, will be illustrated with an analysis of a form of Hiberno-English negation using *devil* (or, as it is often spelled to represent the vernacular, *divil*) as seen in *Divil a one* (= not a one). The principle is applicable in instances where not all causes are equally important: in effect, the principle allows for the possibility of the other factors playing a role even though substrate influence is still foregrounded. The discussion will focus first on the Celtic substrate, which does seem to be the most important factor in *devil* negation. Then the focus will shift to the likely contributions of a universal factor, iconicity, and of superstrate influence from Scots. It will then be shown that an explanation that gave equal weight to all sources could not account well for the evidence that *devil* negation first arose in the English of Scotland and that substrate influence played the most important role.

## 1 Syntactic characteristics of *diabhal* and *dheamhan*

Hiberno-English shows distinctive uses of *devil* negation that reflect peculiarities of an Irish substrate having highly grammaticalized negation patterns with the forms *diabhal* (devil) and *dheamhan* (demon). The method of showing substrate influence will therefore be similar to what Keesing (1991) has used to demonstrate effects of an Oceanic substrate in Melanesian Pidgin: in this contact variety, English lexical forms have combined with grammaticalized patterns from one or more Oceanic languages. The circumstances

of language shift in Ireland make it questionable whether Hiberno-English ever was a pidginized variety (cf. Thomason and Kaufman 1988, Odlin 1995). Nevertheless, the similarity of the process of calquing in Ireland and the Pacific can be demonstrated. The purpose of this section is to describe some aspects of the grammaticalization of *devil* negation in Irish. Section 2 will then show how closely Hiberno-English matches those patterns.

The assumptions about grammaticalization in this paper are consonant with a definition of Kuryłowicz: it "consists in the increase of the range of a morpheme advancing from a lexical to a grammatical or from a less grammatical to a more grammatical status" (1965/1975, p.52). In contrast to work on English *not* and French *pas*, two well-known examples of grammaticalization, little historical research has been conducted on the development of *diabhal* and *dheamhan*. As in the case of *not* and *pas*, *diabhal* and *dheamhan* started as emphatic negators, yet unlike the "bleached" *not* and *pas*, they still have a primarily emphatic function (Ó Siadhail 1980a, p.214); moreover, both usually occur in sentence-initial position, as do negators in many languages (Jespersen 1917, pp.5-6). Most importantly, *diabhal* and *dheamhan* show clear signs of having become integrated into Irish syntactic structures: in the words of Ó Siadhail (1989, p.326), they are "used as a syntactic device". Space does not permit an exhaustive account of the many patterns with *diabhal* and *dheamhan* described by Ó Siadhail (1980b, 1989). Nevertheless, all structures similar to the *divil* patterns known in Hiberno-English will be mentioned. Two structures warrant special attention: 1) *diabhal* and *dheamhan* negators involved in thematic fronting, and 2) the same negators serving in place of a copula. These characteristics indicate that *devil* negation in Irish underwent more grammaticalization than did any variety of English—except for the dialects of the Celtic lands.[5]

### 1.1 Thematic fronting

*Devil* negation in Irish interacts with the syntax of cleft sentences and related focusing patterns which are quite productive in Irish as well as in the other Celtic languages (cf. Ó Siadhail 1989, MacAulay 1992). Below are some of the characteristic cleft patterns in spoken Irish:

1) (Is é) an fear a bhí ag péinteáil cathaoir inné.
Is him the man who was at-painting chair yesterday
It is the man who was painting a chair yesterday.

2) (Is) cathaoir a bhí an fear a phéinteáil inné.
Is chair that was the man painting yesterday
It is a chair that the man was painting yesterday.

3) (Is) ag péinteáil cathaoir a bhí an fear inné.
Is at-painting chair that was the man yesterday
It's painting a chair that the man was yesterday.

(Ó Siadhail 1989, p.236)

The first sentence closely resembles possibilities for clefting in English, the main differences being the pleonastic pronoun *é* and the sentence-initial verb, which conforms to the canonical VSO order of Irish. Another difference between the Irish and English structures is also noteworthy: the copula and pleonastic pronoun are optional in Irish. Thus a well-formed variant of the same sentence is *An fear a bhí ag péinteáil cathaoir inné*. Sentence 2 likewise resembles the English pattern of fronting in clefts, with *cathaoir*, the object of *a phéinteáil*, preceding the whole subordinate clause. (*A phéinteáil* is a variant of *ag péinteáil* although *a* need not be analyzed as a preposition.) The fronting seen in the third sentence is more striking because of what is in the focus position (*ag péinteáil cathaoir*). Technically, *ag péinteáil* can be analyzed either as a prepositional phrase, since *péinteáil* is a verbal noun, or as a verb phrase, since *ag péinteáil* signals progressive aspect (cf. Stenson 1981, Ó Siadhail 1989). In this paper, such examples will be considered cases of VP focus.

O Siadhail (1989, p.327) provides the following example of how the *diabhal* negator can interact with thematic fronting:

4) Diabhal ceann a rug mé aréir air
devil one that caught I last night on-it

ach ceann a rug mé sa bhfeamainn air.
but one that caught I in-the seaweed on-it

Indeed I didn't catch one last night
except one I caught in the seaweed.

As in the case of clefts such as example 2, the object of *rug* (i.e. *ceann*)

precedes a subordinate clause (marked by *a*), which shows that *devil* negation has been integrated into the syntax of focusing in Irish. That is, emphatic negation triggers subordination as well as a word order different from that involved in ordinary negation, as seen in Ó Siadhail's paraphrase:

5) Níor rug mé ar cheann aréir ach
not caught I on one last night but

ceann a rug mé sa bhfeamainn air.
one that caught I in-the seaweed on-it

I didn't catch one last night except one I caught in the seaweed.

In the clause *Níor rug mé ar cheann aréir*, there is no clefting or any other type of subordination: the normal negator *níor* precedes constituents that conform to the canonical VSO order of Irish. It should also be noted that the structure following *ach ceann* is a relative clause and not a focusing structure.

In cases like the cleft sentence seen in example 3, *diabhal* and *dheamhan* can negate a focused VP as seen below:

6) Ach dheamhan imeacht a rinn sé.
But demon departure that made he
[= Devil a departure he made] (p.328)

The normal negative pattern uses the form *imigh* in finite VP constructions as in *Níor imigh sé* (He didn't go), which contrasts with the verbal noun *imeacht* in the more forceful denial with *dheamhan*. A shortened variant is possible too: *Ach dheamhan imeacht*, which Ó Siadhail (1989, p.328) notes can be employed as an "echo form" in response to a finite form of *imigh* that would be used by an interlocutor.

Another noteworthy detail is that when *a* co-occurs with the negator, it often comes after the focused constituent (e.g. example 4, *Diabhal ceann a rug mé ...*), but it can occur immediately after the negator in a subtype that does not involve NP focusing, as seen in *diabhal a raibh sé an-dona*, "Indeed it wasn't very bad" (Ó Siadhail 1989, p.329). This variable positioning differs from an *a* seen in *devil* negation in Hiberno-English (section 2.6).

### 1.2 Substitution for the copula

Aside from thematic fronting, another pattern employing *diabhal* and *dheamhan* is common. When negation involves copulas, the negator fuses with the verb in a portmanteau morpheme:

7) Ní i bhfad go gcuirfidh mise
Not-is long until will-put I-emphatic

athrach ar an áit seo.
change on the place this

It won't be long until I change this place.

When *dheamhan* is the negator, it replaces *ní*:

8) Dheamhan i bhfad go gcuirfidh mise athrach ar an áit seo.

"It certainly won't be long until I change this place." (Ó Siadhail 1989, p.330)

As with other expressions, shorter variants are possible:

9) Dheamhan i bhfad
Demon long

These observations on negation with *diabhal* and *dheamhan* do not exhaust the evidence for grammaticalization. Another significant difference between *devil* negation in Irish and in non-Celtic dialects of English is that *diabhal* and *dheamhan* can occur with a wider range of lexical forms including *ceann* and *i bhfad*, as seen above, *mórán* (much, many), and *leithéid* (such). It may never be possible to provide a detailed diachronic account of how these extensive possibilities for collocation with *diabhal* and *dheamhan* developed (cf. section 5.3). Nevertheless, the collocations clearly suggest that there has been an "increase of the range of a morpheme", to use the formulation of Kuryłowicz, an expansion that resembles the increasing generality of French *pas* through the Middle Ages (Nyrop 1930, p.26-32). As detailed in the next section, the grammaticalization of *diabhal* and *dheamhan* is seen in *devil* negation in Hiberno-English.

## 2 *Devil* negators in Hiberno-English

Certain patterns in Hiberno-English suggest clear cases of substrate influence from Irish as seen in examples from recorded speech, along with similar examples from other sources. The speech samples to be discussed come from transcriptions in the Main Manuscripts Collection of the Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin. All the tokens occurred in the speech of Willie Rourke, a farmer in County Roscommon, who was recorded about twenty-five years ago by James Delaney, a professional folklorist working for the Irish Folklore Commission. Since the UCD archive has kept Delaney's tapes, it was possible to verify the accuracy of several of his transcriptions. Although the sound quality of some of the tapes has degraded over time, the examples that could be checked showed that Delaney was indeed a precise transcriber. Those examples will be discussed first. Since grammaticalization involves both lexis and syntax, the evidence for an Irish substrate in grammaticalized *devil* negators is partly lexical and partly syntactic, and that fact informs the following discussion of elements that follow the *devil* negator. After the discussion, there will also be some consideration of the problematic status of the *a* that follows *divil* in most of the examples.

### 2.1 Noun phrases

The first two instances show what is probably the most common pattern in Hiberno-English, where *divil* precedes a fronted noun phrase:

10) Divil a hare ever he followed from that day until the day he died! 1736: 204 [The numbers indicate the archive volume and page.]

11) D [=Delaney]: Were they paid for it?
R [=Rourke]: Divil a farthin' they got that time. 1736: 247

Although this pattern is common in the substrate, it is also found in England during the Early Modern English period, as seen in *The devil a penny they have left me* from Marlowe's *Faust*, one of the citations under *devil* in *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Simpson and Weiner 1989, p.570); this, along with many examples from Scottish sources, buttresses the argument that superstrate influence cannot

be ruled out (section 4). However, such influence seems highly unlikely in the following patterns.

### 2.2 Indefinite pronouns and determiners

A highly distinctive pattern of Hiberno-English is where the element in focus after *divil* may include *one* as well as other indefinite forms:

12) D: Was there any bonfires or anything like that?
R: Divil a one ever I seen. 1736: 245

13) Divil a one—I never seen any one and I was at many a marriage. 1736: 245-46

14) D: And was there any other, d'ye remember?
R: Well, divil a one more ever I seen them playin', only them three. 1736: 214

Examples 12 and 13 use the pronoun *one*, but the indefinite determiner *one* in example 14 follows a similar pattern, as does *many*:

15) R: Well, I never heard o' that, anyhow. And divil a many butts [of candles] I used to see. They'd wear them out ... 1736: 227

The evidence for cross-linguistic influence is strong in such cases since analogous examples do not appear much—if at all—in England (cf. section 4), and since Irish has close translation equivalents such as *diabhal ceann* (devil one) and *diabhal mórán* (devil many). It should be noted that *ever* frequently appears before the subject of the clause (e.g. *Divil a one ever I seen*). This may well be a case of superstrate influence since *ever* does occur before the subject and verb in EME texts from England (Burke 1896, p.785).

### 2.3 Nominalized verbs

Some of the most striking evidence for substrate influence is seen in structures that resemble the combinations of *diabhal* (or *dheamhan*) and focused VPs in Irish:

16) Oh, I heard, I heard them [stories]. Many a one o' them. Arrah, they wouldn't listen to a story at them wakes, them men. Divil a listen! 1736: 215

17) D: I heard o' them puttin' hen dung in their pockets.
R: And they might do that.
D: You never heard of it?
R: No. Divil a hear ever I heard o' that in the world o' God. 1736: 222

The negated elements here are, in all probability, calques of nominalized verbs such as *dheamhan imeacht* (demon departure), which was cited in section 1.1. In addition to the above examples, which have been verified against the original recording, are citations which are not verified but which are probably just as accurate, in view of Delaney's careful transcription practices:

18) "Well, d'ye know, John?" he [a veterinarian] says, "the best thing ye can do with that one [a mare] is shoot her," he says, "she'll do no good!"
"Divil a shoot ever I'll do with with [sic] her!" says John, "I'll let her die. I never'll shoot her," he says ... 1772: 227

19) Ah, divil a such atin' & drinkin' never was known in the world as was there, for a couple hours. 1709: 265

In the case of *divil a such atin' & drinkin'*, the use of *divil a such* has a close translation equivalent in Irish *dheamhan a leithéid* (demon its likeness) (cf. Ó Siadhail 1980b, p.56). This type of structure seems to have been widespread at least in County Roscommon, as seen in an example noted by Henry (1957) cited in section 2.5. Another example shows *devil* negation collocating with a lexical nominalization: *Divil a loss was on the story* (1709: 297).

### 2.4 Other patterns

Along with the examples just cited, there are other instances of *devil* negation that could not be checked against the tape. One shows a collocation of *divil* and *such* before an ordinary NP:

20) And the finest crame [cream] that ever was seen, was on it [a crock]. And they said they'd venture it in the churn. Divil a such a rowl o' butter ever they took off of a churnin' as they took off. 1709: 460

Another pattern evident in Rourke's speech is clearly a calque on *dheamhan i bhfad* (demon long):

21) He said he'd go again the nex' day. And he went the next day. And he was pullin' away. And divil a long he was pullin' when a giant with two heads came up. 1709: 291

22) "I'll stay here," he says, "until daylight." Divil a long he was in it when the ghost came, and he started. 1709: 292

Aside from the adverbial uses of *long*, it is possible for adjectives to collocate with *devil* negators, as seen in the following example:

23) Divil a drunk ever he got until the chapel was built. 1709: 447

Still another pattern involves an indefinite pronoun, a pattern analogous to the constructions with *divil a one* and *divil a many*:

24) He [a labourer] told him [a priest] he'd pick them & sell them [potatoes] for him. Divil a much but th' other man nearly fainted. 1709: 450

Henry (1957, p.209) found a similar instance, *devil a much but it would be two o'clock*, which he paraphrases as "it must be near two o'clock." This and example 24 probably reflect, albeit obliquely, the Irish *ní mórán* (not-is much), which is equivalent to *nearly* in English.

One pattern in Delaney's transcriptions seems especially intriguing, as it does not appear to have been noted by Henry or anyone else who has written on Hiberno-English:

25) And they wouldn't let them down any place that—so they wouldn't. Divil a down. 1709: 489

Here, the focused element is a particle, and probably reflects the Irish pattern *diabhal síos*.

### 2.5 Examples from other sources

Although Rourke's speech is one of the richest sources for glimpses at *devil* negation in Hiberno-English, it is not idiosyncratic. In Henry's study of the spoken English of North Roscommon (1957), a number of examples resemble Rourke's use of negators, such as *Devil a much but it would be two o'clock*, as well as the following instances:

26) Devil a the like of it I ever saw before.

27) Devil a such a day ever I saw before.

28) Devil a know I know (= I've no idea). (p.130)

The first may be an alternate translation of *dheamhan a leithéid*, the Irish form that also seems to be the source of *devil a such*. The third construction, *Devil a know*, may be based on the Irish *diabhal a mbeadh a fhios agam* (devil that knowledge [is] at-me = I have no knowledge), or perhaps on *an diabhal an bhfeadar* (the devil whether I-know); in English, at any rate, it assumes a nominalized form corresponding to cases such as *Divil a hear*. Ó Siadhail (1980b, p.57) cites a similar structure seen in a dialogue, which may be based on his own intuitions:

29) A: Do you want that strained?
B: Devil a strain!

In contrast to Henry, Taniguchi (1972) did not analyze actual spoken language but instead the representations of speech by writers of fiction and drama. Even if their representation of Hiberno-English fell short in other respects, the writers cited by Taniguchi (pp.46–48) had plausible intuitions about *devil* negation:

30) "Is there 'er a wake here?" "Devil a wake then!" (Ó Faoláin)

31) The devil he does! (O'Flaherty)

32) Divvle th' bit iv coal I'll fetch. (Dunne)

33) Devil the little else they'll be ... (Ryan)

34) Devil a bone o' mine will it ever carry. (Byrne)

35) ... the divil a longer I'll darken your door (Lover)

36) "An' is he hopeful?" "Devil a hopeful." (O'Casey)

37) That's what you are, devil a other. (O'Kelly)

38) Devil a much I says. (Joyce)

39) "I wondher will Lorna come back?" "Devil a come back!" (O'Casey)

40) "I hope he breaks his blasted neck." "Devil a break!" said James Carabine. (Byrne)

Other sources (e.g. Jespersen 1917, pp.32f.) also have examples of *devil* negation, but those instances are generally like the types already discussed.[6]

### 2.6 Why the *a* in *divil a*?

One of the regularities in Rourke's speech is the *a* which invariably follows *divil*. This pattern is no doubt widespread in Hiberno-English: except for 31–33, all of the examples cited above show it. At first glance, the use of *a* might seem to involve no more than an ordinary indefinite article. However, examples such as *divil a many butts*, *divil a drunk*, and *devil a the like of it* pose obvious problems for such a simple interpretation. Although more than one explanation is possible, the most likely one is that the origins of *a* reflect a pattern of formulaic speech which is common in second language acquisition and which is independent of cross-linguistic influence. Once the pattern became widespread, it passed on to monolingual speakers of Hiberno-English such as Willie Rourke. The transmission of formulaic patterns is not, of course, restricted to cases of language contact, as seen in instances such as the morpheme *o'* in fixed time expressions (e.g. *five o'clock*). The *o'* derives historically from a prepositional phrase following a numeral (i.e. *five of the clock*), but there is reason to suppose that *o'* is no longer a preposition for modern speakers: the spelling variants of *o'clock* listed in the *OED* (s.v. *clock*) suggest that many writers from the fifteenth century onward have been unaware of the etymology of *o'*.

Hiberno-English *a* does not differ much from cases such as *o'* except in terms of the original users: it was probably used decades or centuries ago by second language learners who were not really sure about just what *a* represented in *devil* negation. Analogous cases appear in the literature on second language acquisition, as seen with a Japanese child named Uguisu who is recorded as saying *My father is reading a books* (Hakuta 1978, p.136). Another example of an unanalyzed structure is Uguisu's question formula *Do you*, which she extends to occur with verb phrases in past as well as present tense: e.g. *Do you saw this rabbit run away?* and *Do you bought this too?* (p.142). The advantage of such formulaic constructions is that they allow learners to memorize a relatively small set of forms for use in utterances which may be ungrammatical but which are eco-

nomical and comprehensible in many contexts. Accordingly, *divil a* may well be a single morpheme, with *a* being an analogical extension from NP environments to ones where it has no syntactic or semantic function. The fact that Irish has no indefinite article certainly makes it likely that early bilinguals would produce such overextensions.

It should be noted that another explanation is at least possible: that *divil a* results from the propensity of bilinguals long ago to employ the Irish collocation *diabhal a* in their English. However attractive this explanation may seem, it has serious problems. For example, *a* often follows the fronted constituent in Irish, and thus it does not always immediately follow the negator: e.g. example 4, *Diabhal ceann a rug mé*. What is true for the placement of *a* after *diabhal*, moreover, is true for its occurrence after *dheamhan*: e.g. example 6, *Ach dheamhan imeacht a rinn sé*.

## 3 Iconicity and *devil* negation

The evidence for Irish influence in *devil* negation is strong, but in one sense a substrate explanation is incomplete: it cannot explain why *devil* negation is found in any language at all. The basis for this pattern does not seem mysterious, however. The form *devil* and its dialect/translation equivalents show an iconicity well suited for signalling negation. There will be a closer look at the notion of iconicity at the end of this section, but here it will suffice to note Croft's characterization: "the structure of language reflects in some way the structure of experience ... including ... the perspective imposed on the world by the speaker" (1990, p.164). One manifestation of this perspective is, as Croft (p.166) terms it, "iconically motivated polysemy", and one method to identify such cases is cross-linguistic comparison. This method is applicable in the case of *devil* negation, since the polysemy of *devil* forms shows an intuitive cognitive and affective relation between the core meaning of *devil* forms and the semantic extension whereby such forms function as negators.

Even though such negation in Irish and Hiberno-English shows a relatively high degree of grammaticalization, other languages have also been known to use analogous forms. The earliest case I have been able to find comes from Middle High German as seen in

the following citations in the Grimms' *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (1852/1935, p.274) from the *Nibelungenlied*:

> ich bringe iu den tiuvel! 1682, 1;
> I bring you the devil
> = I bring you nothing
>
> du hast den tievel getan. 1930, 4;
> you have the devil done
> = You have done nothing [my translation]

The Grimms also cite more recent examples of the same type of negation. One notable difference between *devil* negation in German and English is the type of grammaticalization found in the former: the negator is preceded by the masculine article marked for accusative case (*den*). French also uses *devil* negation, but unlike German no grammatical signal apart from word order is needed, as in the citation from Vidocq: *C'est bon de servir la police, c'est juste; mais aussi on ne gagne pas le diable*, "It's good to serve the police, it's true; but one gets nothing" [my translation] (Imbs 1979, p.139). As in German, *diable* can function as a direct object; thus Imbs equates *ne pas gagner le diable*, "not earn the devil," with *gagner peu*, "earn little". Exactly how *devil* negation developed in French and German is not clear, but *diable* and *Teufel* (the modern spelling) as well as English *devil* are borrowings from the Greek *diabolos*. Not all languages having *devil* negation use a borrowed form, however. Slovak, like German, uses case marking, but the form of the negator is completely different, as seen in the sentence cited by Konuš (1969) *čerta ti dám* (devil-ACC you-DAT I['ll]-give = I'll give you nothing). Slovak, Russian, and Polish are among the Slavic languages that do have borrowed forms of *diabolos*, but of the three only Polish seems to use such a form (*diabla*) as a negator—and then only in non-grammaticalized patterns (cf. Doroszewski 1960, Konuš 1969, Galperin and Mednikova 1987). The etymology of Proto-Slavic *čert* is uncertain (Buck 1949); nevertheless, it appears that the form is distinctively Slavic, which thus suggests that the semantic extension of Slovak *čert* into *devil* negation constitutes an independent development.

Not all languages seem to use *devil* negation, and of those that do, little or no grammaticalization may be involved. For example, the negator in an Icelandic sentence cited by Ó Siadhail does not

function as a direct object: *Djövull veit ég þaò*, "Devil know I that" (1984, p.135). In contrast to the examples from German and Slovak, *djövull* does not show much grammaticalization apart from, perhaps, its clause-initial position; this example is analogous to instances in many English dialects such as *The devil they doe*, which is part of quotation in the *OED* from English author William Fulke dated to 1579. (The context makes it clear that *doe* functions as a pro-verb and not as a transitive verb.) In the Icelandic and Polish cases, ungrammaticalized expletives can have the same pragmatic force as *devil* negators, and similar cases of pragmatic (but not syntactic) negation can be seen in other languages. For example, Wible (1993) reports that the following form of "post-clausal negation" is common in Mandarin in Taiwan:

> Wo yingai lai, jian nide da tou gui
> I should come, see your big-headed ghost
> "I shouldn't come"

Although *gui* and *devil* are not synonymous, the semantic similarity is clear. At the same time, *gui* is not a constituent of the clause *Wo yingai lai* but of the following clause: in effect, the negation of the first clause relies on a conversational implicature and not on any grammatical device. Other forms that have an iconic potential to be negators include scatological and sexual terms, as seen in recent discussions on the Linguist List of "rude negation" (e.g. Hudson 1993). How many languages exploit the iconic potential of *devil* forms or other rude negators and how they use such forms remain questions to be investigated.

In all probability, there is a continuum in the use of *devil* negation in the languages that use it (or related forms) at all. In its most primitive form, as in the Icelandic example, such negation relies on what is merely an expletive, whereas in its more systematic uses it has identifiable grammatical forms and functions: the Icelandic case represents a minimal grammaticalization while German and Slovak represent cases where there is a good deal more. Two facts argue for considering Irish as a case where the degree of grammaticalization is high: 1) the integration of *devil* negators into the focusing system; 2) the wide range of elements with which such negators can co-occur (section 1). Whatever the degree of grammaticalization in any particular language, there is no doubt an affective

as well as a cognitive basis for rude negation including the special case of *devil* negation. In this sense, the iconicity is similar to that found in work by Osgood, May, and Miron (1975) on "positive" and "negative" polarity in word associations, and also in observations by Givón (1979, p.114) on the diachrony of certain types of negators.

This cross-linguistic survey of *devil* negation suggests that substrate influence must interact with iconicity. Although one might appeal solely to Irish substrate influence to explain such negation in Hiberno-English, the widespread occurrence of *devil* negators in various languages suggests that "iconically motivated polysemy" underlies the use of such negators in any language employing them. The iconicity of *devil* negation suggested here and also in Ó Siadhail (1984) is compatible with a universalist analysis. The "structure of experience" should lead to a linguistic realization of that option in more than one language, even if not all languages exploit a particular option. In one sense, cross-linguistic influence is never a fully satisfactory explanation: any particular form must begin in *some* language, unless one is willing to posit an infinite regress in "borrowing".

Although a monocausal substrate explanation for *devil* negation in Hiberno-English is implausible, a monocausal universalist explanation is even less so. If iconicity were the only determinant, such negators would be more widespread in contact varieties and they would show a high degree of grammaticalization. There appears to be virtually no language contact situation outside the British Isles where this type of negation has been noted, and so language-specific facts, whether substrate or superstrate or both, must play a crucial role (cf. Rickford 1986, p.278). Positing an interaction between substrate influence and universals is not, of course, novel: the literature on language contact and second language acquisition shows many plausible instances of such interaction (e.g. Gass 1979, Hyltenstam 1984, Luján, Minaya, and Sankoff 1984, Odlin 1989, Ho and Platt 1993). In the case of *devil* negators, the iconicity of such forms would make them salient for learners of English to spot in the superstrate as well as make them easy to match with the equivalent forms in Irish and to judge as transferable (cf. Kellerman 1983, Odlin 1991). The evidence in the next sections indeed suggests the superstrate influence is yet another part

of the complex interaction that led to productive uses of *devil* negation in both Ireland and Scotland.

## 4 Superstrate influence

Along with the substrate and universal factors just discussed, there is also evidence for the effects of the English spoken in Britain on Hiberno-English in the area of *devil* negation. Just as the other two factors cannot be ruled out, the case for superstrate influence is compelling. Two kinds of evidence make the case: the earlier appearance as well as the distribution of *devil* negators in Britain, especially in Scotland, and the actual lexeme used in some forms in Hiberno-English.

### 4.1 Early appearance and regional distribution

The use of *devil* negation in Hiberno-English is not documented before the early 18th century (see section 4.2 below), whereas in Britain it was probably in use by the late 15th century. The earliest citation in the OED is dated 1508 for a line from Walter Kennedy's *Flyting with Dunbar: The deuill a gude thou hais!* (Simpson and Weiner 1989, p.570). However, this date is the latest possible one since the life span dates for this Scottish author are believed to be from 1460 to 1508 (Drabble 1985, p.529). *The Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* lists another form of *devil* negation used by Kennedy in *Flyting with Dunbar: Off all his denner ... His breist held deill a bit* (Craigie 1933, p.53); the word-medial consonant is absent in *deill*, a form which also appears later in Hiberno-English (see section 4.2 below). The *DOST* lists, moreover, what is probably an earlier quotation, *The deuill ane stirk taill thairfor sall ȝe haif*, from another Scots poet, Robert Henryson (Craigie 1933, p.105), whose life span dates are considered to be from 1424 to 1506 (cf. Fox 1981, p.xxi, Drabble 1985, p.453). In contrast to these citations, one from Nicholas Udall, the earliest English author cited in the *OED*, dates back only to 1542: *The Deuill of the one chare of good werke they doen*. Along with the citations from Henryson and Kennedy, two others in the *DOST* probably also predate Udall's: one for an anonymous poem *The Freiris of Berwick* (cf. Ridley 1973, p.1053), and the other from William Stewart (Stephen & Lee 1921). Accordingly, four Scottish sources probably antedate Udall, and two of those authors, Henryson and Kennedy, may well have used *devil* negation before 1500. It remains unclear

just how early the pattern existed: the *Middle English Dictionary* lists no examples of *devil* negation despite copious listings for other senses of *devil* (Kurath 1956). In any case, there seems to be no evidence that *devil* negation spread from England to Scotland. Moreover, the earlier Scottish uses suggest that Scotland may be a source for *devil* negation not only in Hiberno-English but also in the dialects of England. The fact that Scotland is the earliest area known to use *devil* negation also suggests a possibility of substrate influence from Scottish Gaelic, a possibility considered below (section 5).

The regional distribution of *devil* negation accords with the idea that Scotland is the geographic source. All of the examples of such negation found in the *English Dialect Dictionary* (Wright 1898) come from north of the Tweed or from Ireland. Moreover, *devil* negators were apparently once quite common in Scots, to judge from the numerous examples in *The Scottish National Dictionary* (Grant and Murison 1952, p.46), which are listed in the appendix of this paper.

### 4.2 The lexeme *deil*

Before the discussion of early examples of *devil* forms in Hiberno-English, it will help to consider some further facts about *devil* negation in Britain. In this connection, two differences between the citations in the *SND* and those in the *OED* should be noted. First, all of the *OED* forms show *devil* (or a spelling variant) preceded by the definite article, while only some of the *SND* forms do. Second, the only *OED* negators that are spelled *deil* come from Scotland. The northern counties of England do have the same or similar forms, as seen in a citation in the *EDD* for Cumberland (Wright 1898, p.62), though the citation does not involve negation. In her *Concise Scots Dictionary*, Robinson (1985) lists [dil] as the usual pronunciation of *deil*, which reflects a conditioned loss of the word-medial consonant in northern British dialects during the Middle English period (Jordan 1974, p.192-194). Although this form appears as early as Kennedy (see section 4.1 above), not all varieties of Scots had yet adopted this change in the 16th century: the *DOST* lists some spelling variants of *devil* that seem to represent a labiodental fricative.

The predominantly Scottish use of *deil* provides strong evidence for superstrate influence from Scots on Hiberno-English, since that form occurs in the earliest example of *devil* negation in Hiberno-

English that I have been able to find. Bliss (1978) reproduces part of a drama called *The Twin Rivals* by George Farquhar. Written in 1702 or 1703, the play includes dialogue between one Hermes Woudbee and his Irish servant Teague:

> **Woudbee**: Tho' this Fellow travell'd the World over he would never lose his Brogue nor his Stomach—Why, you Cormorant, so hungry and so early!
>
> **Teague**: Early! Deel tauke me, Maishter, 'tish a great deal more than almost twelve a-clock.
>
> **Woudbee**: Thou art never happy unless thy Guts be stuft up to thy Eyes.
>
> **Teague**: Oh Maishter, dere ish a dam way of distance, and the deel a bit between. (Bliss 1978, p.138)

Elsewhere in the play, Teague is represented as a Catholic, and he is no doubt meant to be a speaker of Irish: he uses Irish words e.g. *agra*, "darling"), and he employs voiceless palatalized consonants as in *ish* and voiced alveolar stops instead of voiced interdental fricatives as in *dere*, which should be seen as attempts to represent phonetic influences of Irish upon his English (pp.232–9). Although only the second *devil* construction (*deel a bit*) involves negation, both that and *deel tauke me* clearly suggest a Scots superstrate.[7] These uses are not the only evidence of that superstrate in the lines for Teague: in other parts of the play, for example, he uses stereotypical Scots forms *croon* (/kru:n/) and *hoose* (/hu:s/) for *crown* and *house* (pp.138–43, 213, 322f.). Moreover, Teague describes himself as a native of Carrickfergus, a town north of Belfast that had sizeable numbers of Scottish inhabitants as well as Irish and English in the 17th century (Braidwood 1964, p.12, Bliss 1978, p.138). However invidious the stereotype of Irish Catholics is in *The Twin Rivals*, the play does seem to offer some useful evidence about the early language contact situation.

Teague is not the only early example of an Irish character using such pronunciations of *devil*. Bliss (1978, p.112) cites another play, dated to 1663, with an Irish character saying *fuate de Deole ale thee* (what the devil ails thee). This example does not involve *devil* negation, but it does provide further evidence that the Scottish form was adopted by Irish speakers (and, again, there are other instances of Scottish usage as well as of Irish influence in this play). Though not

as early as the two plays, other instances of *deil* spellings show the persistence of the Scottish form as seen in Ulster dialect literature cited by Wright (1898, pp.61f.) and in a novel dated to 1840 by Traynor (1953, p.78): e.g. *He wanted me to inform on the boys up—deil a less it was*. There can be no doubt that Scots *deil* was a superstrate form available to Irish speakers. At the same time, the dates of the *DOST* citations make it safe to assume that *devil* negators with the medial consonant would also have been available from speakers of dialects of Scotland or England.

## 5 The Gaelic substrate in Scots

The evidence in the preceding section suggests that superstrate influence from Scots on Hiberno-English cannot be ruled out. This should not be surprising in view of the sociohistoric conclusion reached by Adams about the language shift in the regions near Belfast: "what had replaced Irish in many parts of this central area of east Ulster was not English in the strict sense, as happened in other parts of Ireland, but Scots" (1976/1986, p.122). However, while the evidence for such influence is strong, the question remains as to whether Lowlands Scots itself reflects a Gaelic substrate in general as well as a specific influence in *devil* negation.[8] Space does not permit an extended consideration of the former question, but the issue is important enough to warrant discussion relevant to the latter question, i.e. to *devil* negators.

The spread of English through Lowland Scotland was gradual, with the earliest Anglo-Saxon settlements developing in the southeast between the Tweed and the Firth of Forth during the early seventh century (Jackson 1953). Through the Middle Ages the attrition of Gaelic in the Lowlands was probably gradual in most places, and some historians see the Highland Line, the traditional boundary between Highlands and Lowlands, as a meaningful demarcation only from about the sixteenth century (cf. Lorimer 1949–1952, Dorian 1981, Romaine and Dorian 1981, Bannerman 1988, Barrow 1989). The persistence of Gaelic in the medieval Lowlands seems undeniable in view of the ample evidence from place names, legal and ecclesiastical terms, the lexicon of the medieval kinship system, and other words as well (McClure 1986, Nicolaisen 1988). Moreover, there is good evidence of Gaelic-based calques in some

Lowlands regions such as Galloway. MacFarlane (1923, p.195) cites parallels between Galloway Scots and Hiberno-English such as the *after* perfect as in *He was just after gettin' his supper when I lookit ben* (i.e. looked in), a structure that most specialists agree is an instance of substrate influence in Hiberno-English (e.g. Bliss 1984, Harris 1984). As MacFarlane concedes, it is possible that such structures reflect earlier contact between inhabitants of Galloway and Irish immigrants to Scotland, but Milroy (1982) does not see much evidence for influence of such immigrants on the local varieties of Scots. The likelihood of indigenous Gaelic influence in Galloway is especially significant because this was one of the regions that would become a major source of Scottish settlers in Ireland (Braidwood 1964, p.11; Adams 1976/1986, pp.119–123). Along with speakers from Lowlands regions such as Galloway, Scottish settlers also came from Highland regions such as Argyllshire, as seen, for example, in Carrickfergus (Braidwood 1964, p.12).[9]

The facts of settlement history in Ireland thus suggest that the Scots superstrate influence may have been shaped in part by substrate influence from Scottish Gaelic. The transmission of such influence may have come either directly from bilinguals from the Highlands or Galloway who are believed to have migrated to Ulster, or indirectly from Scots monolinguals whose parents or grandparents had been Gaelic speakers (Adams 1976/1986). With regard to *devil* negation, three facts argue for the likelihood of Scots showing the effects of substrate influence: 1) the highly similar lexical co-occurrences with *devil* forms in Scots, Hiberno-English, and Gaelic (both Scottish and Irish); 2) the distinctive distribution of *a* with *devil* negators in both Scots and Hiberno-English; 3) the location and timing of the first attested *devil* negators.

### 5.1 Lexical co-occurrences

The most striking lexical correspondences are seen in Table 1 on p.24. All of them come from sources cited in this paper (e.g. in the citations from the *SND*) or from native speakers of Irish and Scottish Gaelic. Just as striking as these correspondences are some other characteristics. First, more than one translation correspondence may exist between Scots, Hiberno-English, and Irish and Scottish Gaelic (the Celtic languages being subsumed under the heading *Gaelic*): e.g. Hiberno-English *divil a much* corresponds to Scots

| HIBERNO-ENGLISH | SCOTS | GAELIC[10] |
|---|---|---|
| divil a one | deil ane<br>deil a ane | diabhal duine<br>diabhal ceann |
| divil a many<br>divil a much | deil a mony<br>deil a muckle | diabhal mórán |
| devil a the like of it<br>divil a such | deil be-lickit | dheamhan a leithéid |
| divvle th' bit<br>divil a bit | deil the bit<br>devill inche<br>dewill a bitt | an diabhol mir<br>diabhal é |
| divil a fear[11] | Deil a fear | diabhal (dheamhan) a heagail do |

**TABLE 1**
**Correspondences in *devil* negation**

*deil a muckle*, with both having *diabhal mórán* as their likely source. Second, some of the calquing is inexact: for example, there is a discrepancy in word order between the Scottish Gaelic *an diabhol mir* (literally, the devil bit) and a Scots equivalent, *deill the bit* (cf. Dwelly 1973 s.v. *diabhol*). Third, some of the most distinctive Scots words do not appear to have had any superstrate influence on Hiberno-English. *Deil be-lickit*, for example, does not seem a likely source for *devil a the like of it*.

The three characteristics just cited are compatible with a substrate explanation. Just as different translators may hit on different solutions in rendering a work such as the *Iliad* into English, language learners do not always solve their translation problems in identical—or equally successful—ways (Taylor 1975). Indeed, if cross-linguistic influence is ever an autonomous source for substrate features in the Celtic lands, there should be cases such as *Devil a the like of it* and *deil be-lickit*, where the Gaelic substrate is manifested in radically different English forms.

### 5.2 Distribution of *a*

Along with the striking lexical correspondences seen above, another important piece of evidence is the presence of the somewhat mysterious *a* not only in Hiberno-English but also in Scots, e.g. *deil a mony*, *deil a muckle*, and *deil a ane*. As discussed earlier, the *a* probably reflects the fossilization of a formulaic pattern in an earlier period of language contact (cf. section 2.6 above). Even though *a* may not directly show the effects of cross-linguistic influence, it does indicate that the processes of second language acquisition at work in Ireland had also been at work in Scotland.

### 5.3 Location and timing

The structural facts cited in Table 1 argue strongly for substrate influence in both Scotland and Ireland, and the facts certainly accord with the chronology of *devil* negation. Scots authors such as Henryson and Kennedy were using *devil* constructions well before any author in England (section 4.1). Along with this chronological evidence, there is the additional fact that *devil* negation does not seem to have undergone as much grammaticalization in any part of England. The examples from England cited in the *OED* show a restricted set of choices:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *the* + *devil* | + | S | The diuel they doe |
| | | NP | The devil a penny they have left me... |
| | of | NP | The divel of the one chare... |

Only the first two patterns seem productive: the partitive construction seen in Udall apparently never caught on. Significantly, examples with a VP focus are not found even though they do occur in Hiberno-English and Scots: e.g. *divil a hear* and *deil (a) haet* (have-it). In the case of NPs, moreover, there is no evidence in the *OED* that *devil* can precede any type except ones having an article and noun: there seem to be no instances of where *devil* is followed by a pronoun, an adjective, or *such*, *much*, and *many*, which are used as determiners and/or pronouns. As for the first type, seen above in *The diuel they doe*, there is little if any grammaticalization (section 3). In comparison with Scots and Hiberno-English, then, the range of *devil* negation in England seems highly restricted.

The chronology of *devil* negation remains problematic in one respect, however. The first known example of a negator with *diabhal*

or *dheamhan* is not especially early. Ó Siadhail (1984, p.135) noted the following occurrence found in a collection of Irish sayings edited by O'Rahilly (1921, p.30):

> An uair nach mbíonn mo bholg lán
> The time that-not is my belly full
>
> don deamhan dán ná amhrán
> to-the devil poem nor song
>
> When my belly is not full,
> Devil a poem or song. [My translation]

These two lines come from a quatrain whose exact date is unknown, and O'Rahilly (p.59) offers a wide range, 1400–1700, for the "great majority" of the quatrains. Ó Siadhail (personal communication) believes that structural characteristics of the lines indicate that the lines "belong to the latter end of the time spectrum suggested by O'Rahilly". Thus an appropriately conservative estimate would be to date the lines to the 17th century, well after the earliest examples known for English.

The relative dates of the English and Irish examples make it possible to argue that *devil* negation started in the former language and then spread to the latter. If such a conclusion were sound, it would certainly complicate—though not rule out—a substrate factor. However, the chronological discrepancy between vernacular *devil* forms in English and Irish is probably just an artifact of the available written sources. Blake (1992, p.18) has argued that it is hard for linguists to make inferences about the Middle English vernacular because few of the sources are written in an informal register. What is true for English in this regard is even truer for Old, Middle, and Early Modern Irish.[12] Moreover, the amount of written vernacular material in Scottish Gaelic is minimal for any period before the eighteenth century (Black 1989). If, as is likely, *devil* negation was common in Scots in Henryson's time (and perhaps before), a similar inference for Scottish and Irish Gaelic seems warranted. This inference is all the more plausible in view of lexical analyses by Ó Baoill (1991, p.14-15), who discusses two examples of where fish terms in Scots (*finnock* and *powan*) are attested earlier than their Gaelic counterparts. As Ó Baoill observes, etymological and comparative considerations argue for Gaelic being the source

of the Scots terms, despite the discrepancy in attestation dates.

It is certain that *devil* negation in Scottish and Irish Gaelic shows a greater degree of grammaticalization in comparison with the *devil* patterns found in dialects of English *outside* the Celtic lands. That fact also argues for an earlier use of *devil* negation in the Celtic languages. Although grammaticalization might take place rapidly, the normal state of affairs is more probably cases such as *pas* in French, where the evolution of the emphatic negator and its integration into the syntactic system took place over many centuries (see section 2.2 above). In view of the extensive collocational possibilities of *devil* negators in two Celtic languages—along with the fact that these negators form part of a highly structured system of focusing—the likelihood is high that the grammaticalization of *diabhal* and *dheamhan* began long before English *devil* forms became negators.

## 6 Conclusions

The evidence so far may seem to provide unambiguous support for a multicausal explanation: in accounting for the development of *devil* negation in Hiberno-English, it seems impossible to rule out the importance of substrate or superstrate influence or of universals in the form of iconicity. Yet even though a multicausal explanation for *devil* negation is needed, the Scottish evidence suggests that not all causes are equal in this instance. If the superstrate factor was so crucial in Ireland, why wasn't it so in Scotland? *Devil* negation first appears in written English from Scotland, but there is no evidence of a superstrate responsible for any sort of *devil* negation there and especially not for the grammaticalized forms seen in Scots. By a similar logic, if iconicity was a co-equal cause, one would expect to find highly developed patterns of *devil* negation in all dialects of English, if not in all the languages of the world.

As suggested earlier, the single-cause arguments of Bliss, Lass, and others have the merit of foregrounding what could be the most important factor in a complex chain of causes, which in the case of *devil* negation is substrate influence. Although the analysis here does not rule out iconicity or superstrate influence—and thus lacks the parsimony that Lass (1990a) invokes—it accounts for all the relevant facts in the ontogeny of the negation pattern in Hiberno-

English. On the relation between substrate and superstrate influence, the following principle is applicable:

> When substrate influence can be posited for the same structure in two or more language contact situations, and when this influence arises independently in at least one of those situations, the substrate is the primary causal factor in both situations, unless there is evidence that the structure could not have developed without a contribution from superstrate influence.

This generalization, which can be termed the Principle of Minimal Necessity, applies to *devil* negation in the sense that such negation arose in Scotland independently and with no contribution from the superstrate (apart from the loan form *devil*). By this principle, the process crucial for the ontogeny of such negation in Scotland was also at work in Ireland even though superstrate influence no doubt contributed.[13] The principle does not say anything about universals since iconicity seems necessary to explain how such negation develops in a substrate language but yet not sufficient to explain the degree of grammaticalization seen in the Celtic substrate —or in the English of Scotland and Ireland.

The Principle of Minimal Necessity seems applicable to certain other language contact situations. In the Andes, for example, Spanish and Quechua have been in contact for centuries, and it may be possible to identify cases where structures have developed independently in this vast region and where Quechua influence played more of a role than superstrate influence from Spanish (cf. Muysken 1984). Other contact situations such as the the Indian subcontinent are somewhat more complex in view of the number of languages and the length of the contact period. Nevertheless, investigations of such cases are also worthwhile, if it is desirable to provide accounts of multiple causation that improve on the assumption that all causes are equal.

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## Appendix
## Citation in the *Scottish National Dictionary*

1. Prefixed to nouns or quasi-nouns, most freq. with the indef. art. (*deil a; de'illie, deily* (Ork.)) = no —, not a —, never a —, as in (1) *deil a'*, nothing at all (Bnff.[2] 1940); (2) (*the*) *deil a fear(s) (o't)* (Abd.[27] 1947; Fif.[10] 1940), *devil a fears* (Cai.[7], Fif.[1] 1940; Rxb. 1923 Watson *W.-B.*), not likely, no fear; (3) *deil (a) haet*, see Haet; (4) *deil a hair*, see Hair, *n.*; (5) *deil a mony*, not many, very few; (6) *deil a muckle*, not much; (7) *deil ane* (Fif.[1], Slg.[3] 1940), *(the) — a ane*, not one; no-one at all; in Hdg. quot. contr. simply to *deil*; (8) *deil a o(u)cht*, not a thing, nothing at all; (9) *deil the bit*, not at all; (10) *deily (=deil a) me'tin'*, not a grain, not a particle (Ork.[1] 1940)

(1) w.Dmf. 1917 J.L. Waugh *Cute McCheyne* 34:
The young lad used to be very feart for his faither—mony a wallopin' he got for daein' deil a'.
(2) Sh. 1891 J.J.H. Burgess *Ramsie's Buddie* 50:
An haena muckle toucht or care

For daily bread;
An dootliss ken dir deil a faer
Bit dey'll be cled.
Edb. 1894 P. H. Hunter *J. Inwick* viii.:
"Deil a fear o'him," says I; "man, An'ra, ye shape a'body's shoon by your ain shauchled feet."
Rxb. 1919 *Kelso Chron.* (22 Aug.) 2/6: Nannie would remonstrate: "De'il a fear, Nan; there's a Hand abune that guides the gully."
(5) Knr. 1891 "H. Haliburton" *Ochil Idylls* 14:
Deil a mony troots we gruppit,
Baith owre and in the linns we luppit.
(6) Abd.[28] 1948:
Jeannie's affa prood o'her new frock bit deil a muckle div I think o't.
(7) Sc. 1816 Scott *B. Dwarf* vii.:
That's the auld Border law ... Deil ane need doubt it.
Abd. c.1750 R. Forbes *Jnl. from London* (1755) 27:
Deil ane has glacked my mitten.
Ags. 1924 A. Gray *Any Man's Life* 43:
And deil a ane the waur, O!
Hdg. 1885 J. Lumsden *Rhymes and Sk.* 12:
The lads hail clad, the lassies braw,
An' deil o' either sickly.
Ayr. 1784 Burns *O Tibbie* (Cent. ed.) vii.:
The Deil a ane wad spier your price,
Were ye as poor as I.
(8) Sh. 1947 *New Shetlander* I.10:
Dey kin bide naethin, na, deil a oucht.
Abd. 1889 W. Allan *Sprays* 35:
Wha tae gain their ain ends deil a ocht they wad hain.
(9) Arg. 1914 N. Munro *New Road* xxi.:
Deil the bit, my lord! ... 'Twas him that did it! I know it in my bones.
(10) Ork. 1880 Dennison *Sketch-Bk.* 41:
Bit Deily me'tin' wus on yin wisps mair or's on the back o me hand.

## Notes

1. *Hiberno-English* and *Irish English* are the terms most frequently used for the English spoken in Ireland. Although some scholars strongly prefer one or the other (or some other term), the former seems to be the most common in recent literature on the subject and it will therefore be used here. There are several discussions of the historical background of the decline of Irish and the rise of Hiberno-English (e.g. Braidwood 1964; Bliss 1976a,b; de Fréine 1977; Fitzgerald 1984; Hindley 1990; Odlin 1994; Kallen 1995).

2. Lass's arguments are extensions of a more general position he takes on the formation of English not only in Ireland but in other parts of the world as well (1990b). Although Lass cogently argues that a southern British superstrate had an important role in the formation of many overseas varieties, his reductionist stance is unconvincing. According to Lass, the coherence of the superstrate vowel system precludes any significant influence from sources besides the superstrate. Space does not permit a detailed rebuttal of this position, but it should be noted that carrying Lass's unicausal stance to its logical conclusion would certainly lead to dubious claims: e.g. a claim that South African Indian English shows no significant contact effects because its vowel system shows a clear southern British pattern (cf. Mesthrie 1992).

3. Long before Lass, there was a remarkable readiness to dismiss any notion of significant Celtic influence in Scots as well as other varieties of English (e.g. Wilson 1915). Dorian (1991) offers a provocative look at social biases that may have contributed to the scepticism about Celtic influence.

4. Statistical methods such as factor analysis and other techniques common in sociolinguistics can provide useful information about the relative importance of causes, but it is clearly desirable to identify principles that can help to rank causes in instances when quantitative approaches are not feasible.

5. As there seems to be little written on the use of *devil* negation in Welsh, the discussion will focus on the patterns that have been described in the Goidelic branch of Celtic and in the English varieties that arose in the course of language contact.

6. Joyce notes not only *devil* negation (1910/1988, p.72) but another negator as well, *sorrow* (1910/1988, p.70), which is a euphemism for the Devil (*Sorrow a know I know*). Although little work has been done on *sorrow* as a negator, it seems clear that this usage was once widespread both in Ireland and Scotland, as seen in the *SND* and other sources (e.g. Taniguchi 1972, p.45-47). The collocation of *sorrow* with the nominalized form *know* suggests a syntactic behavior similar to *devil* negation in Hiberno-English, which in turn suggests a likelihood of substrate influence. It is not clear, however, what Irish or Scottish Gaelic form(s) would be the basis for this construction, although two possibilities are *donas* (deuce) and *tubaist* (misfortune) (cf. Ó Dónaill 1977, p. 436, Ó Siadhail 1989, p.331).

7. In their reviews of Bliss (1978), Canny (1980) and Henry (1981) criticize some of the historical and linguistic assumptions made by Bliss. However, neither has any comments about the accuracy of *devil* negation in the plays cited.

8. The idea that substrate influence from Scottish Gaelic influenced the Scots superstrate available to Irish speakers is similar to arguments Holm (1986) has made for the possible diffusion of African substrate features in the pidgins and creoles of the Pacific.

9. Some of the clearest evidence of substrate influence in the Celtic lands is seen in a study by Sabban (1982) of Gaelic influence on various English structures, especially verb systems, in a dialect in the Outer Hebrides, a region often considered to be part of the Highlands. It is thus possible to extrapolate from Sabban's findings to earlier contact situations in the Highlands and Lowlands.

10. This column includes patterns of *devil* negation in both Irish and Scottish Gaelic. Although no one seems to have done an exhaustive analysis of such patterns in Scottish varieties, the great overall similarity between the Gaelic of Ireland and Scotland suggests that there are no significant differences with regard to *devil* negation (cf. Ó Dochartaigh 1992, MacAulay 1992). Indeed, the native-speaker intuitions I have been able to elicit on *devil* negation suggest the same high degree of grammaticalization in the Scottish as in the Irish varieties. Moreover, patterns of cursing involving the Devil seem to be virtually the same in Scotland and Ireland, though that topic is beyond the scope of this article. .

11. I have not found *divil a fear* in any written source for Hiberno-English, but Bairbre Ní Fhloinn, Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin, has told me that it is still used, at least in County Tipperary.

12. The only dictionary for Irish and Scottish Gaelic that is at all comparable to the *OED* is the dictionary of the Royal Irish Academy (1983). The only senses of *diabhal* and *dheamhan* described there are theological ones. Until the unpublished manuscripts for Irish and Scottish Gaelic become more accessible, it will remain an open question as to whether there are any examples of *devil* negation earlier than *don deamhan dán ná amhrán*.

13. This principle resembles a "multiple effects principle" posited by Selinker (1992, pp.262f.), which posits a central role for language transfer, a phenomenon more or less equivalent to substrate influence. The resemblance is probably more than just coincidental, but the Principle of Minimal Necessity is limited to clarifying relations between substrate and superstrate, whereas Selinker's principle may have wider applicability.

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